

Please amend the Application as follows.

**IN THE CLAIMS:**

The present listing of claims replaces all prior versions, and listings of claims in the application.

1. (Previously Presented) A cellulose ether blend comprising:

- a) cellulose ether,
- b) from 0.1 to 10% by weight of an additive selected from the group consisting of starch, starch ether, guar, guar ether and xanthan, based on the cellulose ether in a dry form,
- c) optionally from 0.05 to 1% by weight of polyacrylamide, based on the dry cellulose ether, and
- d) optionally further additives,

wherein said cellulose ether blend is prepared by a process comprising,

metering-in additive b) as an aqueous solution or as a powder,

metering-in polyacrylamide c) as an aqueous solution to form a water-moist cellulose ether having a moisture content in the range from 25% to 75% by weight, based on the weight of the moist cellulose ether,

mixing (a) - (d),

optionally further adding water, and

milling and drying the cellulose ether blend,

further wherein said cellulose ether blend has a bulk density that is more than 40 g/l greater than the bulk density of a comparative cellulose ether blend prepared by mixing in the absence of milling.

2. (Previously Presented) The cellulose ether blend of Claim 1, wherein the cellulose ether is methyl cellulose or methylhydroxyalkyl cellulose.

3. (Previously Presented) The cellulose ether blend of Claim 1, wherein the additive b) has been metered in as a powder.

CH-7992

- 2 -

4. (Previously Presented) The cellulose ether blend of Claim 1, wherein the polyacrylamide c) is an anionic polyacrylamide having a sodium acrylate content of less than 20% by weight and a viscosity of less than 1000 mPas (as determined under conditions of 1% strength by weight in 10% strength by weight sodium chloride solution, at a temperature of 25°C).

5. (Previously Presented) The cellulose ether blend of Claim 1, wherein a starch ether selected from the group consisting of hydroxyalkyl starch, alkylhydroxyalkyl starch and carboxymethylhydroxyalkyl starch is used as additive b).

6-10. (Cancelled)